

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
March 17, 2011

**BAYSHORE BIKEWAY/SAN DIEGO COASTAL TRAIL**

Project No. 11-007  
Project Manager: David Hayes

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$2,500,000 to the San Diego Association of Governments for final design and construction of nearly 3 miles of the Coastal Trail along San Diego Bay.

**LOCATION:** Cities of San Diego and National City, in San Diego County

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Public Access

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**EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)
  - Exhibit 2: [Site map](#)
  - Exhibit 3: [Photos](#)
  - Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)
  - Exhibit 5: [\*Bayshore Bikeway Project \(Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A\) Final Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study \(May 2009\) and Addendum \(April 2010\) and Second Addendum \(October 2010\)\*](#)
  - Exhibit 6: [\*San Diego Association of Governments Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program, Bayshore Bikeway Project \(Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A\)\*](#)
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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400 - 31410 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to \$2,500,000 (two million five hundred thousand dollars) to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) for final design and construction of 2.8 miles of the Bayshore Bikeway, as a segment of the California Coastal Trail, in the cities of San Diego and National City as depicted in Exhibit 2, and subject to the following conditions:

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1. Prior to disbursement of any funds for construction, SANDAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer:
  - a. An agreement between SANDAG and the cities of San Diego and National City authorizing SANDAG to construct the Bayshore Bikeway, and acknowledging the cities' responsibility to operate and maintain the Bikeway as a segment of the California Coastal Trail.
  - b. A work program for the construction of the Bikeway, including schedule and budget.
  - c. The names of any contractors SANDAG intends to use to complete the project.
2. In carrying out the construction, SANDAG shall comply with all applicable mitigation and monitoring measures for the project that are identified in the *Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4,5,7, and 8A) Final Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study, May 2009*, and in the *San Diego Association of Governments Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program, Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A)*, both adopted by SANDAG on May 1, 2009.
3. To the extent appropriate, SANDAG shall ensure that the project improvements are consistent with the Conservancy's 'Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development' and with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations and guidelines governing barrier-free access for persons with disabilities.
4. SANDAG, shall ensure that signs are installed and maintained along the Bayshore Bikeway, identifying the project as a segment of the "California Coastal Trail" and incorporating interpretive panels and acknowledgement of Conservancy funding, the design, number and placement of which has been approved by the Executive Officer."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public access.
3. The proposed project serves more than local needs and will provide facilities that will serve major employment centers, be used and enjoyed by the regional population, and by visitors to the region from across the state and country.
4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the *Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7 and 8a) Final Mitigated Negative Declaration Initial Study*, and the *San Diego Association of Governments Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program, Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A)*, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6, respectively, and finds that the project avoids, reduces or mitigates the possible significant environmental effects and that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382."

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$2,500,000 to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) for final design and construction of nearly 2.8 miles of the Bayshore Bikeway, as a segment of the Coastal Trail, along the southeastern edge of San Diego Bay. The project proposed to be constructed under this grant, known as “Segments 4 and 5” of the Bayshore Bikeway, will extend from West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Tidelands Avenue in National City to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Harbor Drive in the City of San Diego (see Exhibit 2). At the project's south end, it connects to an existing 1.1 mile section of bike path that includes the Gordy Shields Bridge over the Sweetwater River. In National City, it will provide access to the National City Marina, Pepper Park, and the nearby historic Santa Fe train depot. From this point north, the Bayshore Bikeway/California Coastal Trail will provide a somewhat rare opportunity to pass through one portion of California's working waterfronts, including the Port of San Diego's National City marine terminal facility. As the bikeway enters the City of San Diego, it will pass through Naval Station San Diego, home port of the U.S. Navy's Pacific fleet.

The proposed project is an extension of a planned Class I bikeway and pedestrian path encircling San Diego Bay. This bikeway is within the planned alignment of the California Coastal Trail, and is designated as the Bayshore Bikeway in the San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan. Currently, approximately 13 miles of the Bayshore Bikeway is completed as a Class I bikeway, and 1.8 miles are scheduled to begin construction in the City of Chula Vista by March 2011. The Bayshore Bikeway is a multi-use, multi-function facility. It is multi-use because it serves both bicyclists and pedestrians, and it is multi functional because it provides for safe and attractive nonmotorized coastal access around San Diego Bay for both transportation and recreation purposes. When completed, the Bikeway will connect numerous destinations including residential communities in the City of Imperial Beach, the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, two Naval bases, the historic Hotel del Coronado, a variety of bay-oriented parks, maritime employment sites, proposed mixed used bayfront development in the City of Chula Vista, and the metropolitan center of the San Diego region.

Segments 4 and 5 of the Bayshore Bikeway and Coastal Trail, which are proposed for Conservancy funding under this staff recommendation, enter into the industrialized section of the San Diego Bayfront. The project will improve access for both commuters and recreational riders interested in seeing the working waterfront. Of particular importance is that the project will serve Naval Station San Diego, a regionally major employer on the Bikeway.

Currently, approximately one-half of the Bayshore Bikeway has been constructed to its planned configuration as a continuous Class 1 bikeway. With the completion of the project in Chula Vista (Segments 7 and 8) scheduled for construction in the summer of 2011, and the addition of the National City and San Diego section that would be funded by this grant, over 70% of the bikeway will be complete.

SANDAG is a public agency comprised of the County of San Diego and the 18 cities within the County and it serves as the regional planning agency for transportation. SANDAG allocates millions of dollars each year in local, state, and federal funds for the region's transportation

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network. SANDAG develops the Regional Transportation Plan to implement a long-range vision for buses, the Trolley, rail, highways, major streets, bicycle travel, walking, goods movement, and airport services.

**Site Description:** The eastern San Diego Bay front largely contains industrial land uses. The proposed bike path alignment traverses the Naval Base San Diego and railroad and trolley corridors within the City of San Diego, and industrial uses and the San Diego Unified Port District (Port of San Diego) Marine Terminal within the City of National City.

**Project History:** The Bayshore Bikeway has been a regional vision since the original planning efforts were completed in 1976. The plan was updated by SANDAG in 2006, and has since been making steady progress toward complete implementation. The portion of the existing Bikeway that crosses the Sweetwater River on the Gordy Shields Bridge was initiated under a State Coastal Conservancy technical assistance grant.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	\$2,500,000.00
SANDAG	1,060,000.00
Other (Federal funds)	<u>607,000.00</u>
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	\$4,167,000.00

Conservancy funds are expected to come from an appropriation to the Conservancy in fiscal year 2008-09 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 authorizes the use of bond funds for projects that promote access to and enjoyment of coastal resources and that are consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code Section 75060). The proposed bikeway will provide access directly to the San Diego Bay shoreline for the enjoyment of resident and visitors. Further, the project is consistent with the Conservancy enabling legislation as detailed below.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project is consistent with Public Resources Code Section 31400 in that the Conservancy is responsible for ensuring that a system of public accessways is implemented to provide access to and along the state's coastline. By granting funds to SANDAG to construct the Bayshore Bikeway, the Conservancy is helping to complete the Coastal Trail, which is an integrated trail system.

Pursuant to Sections 31400.1 and 31400.3, the Conservancy may grant funds to a public agency to develop land for public access purposes, as long as the project will serve greater than local need. The Bayshore Bikeway serves as a key coastal access opportunity for the five jurisdictions that surround San Diego Bay, and San Diego Bay is a major tourist destination serving visitors from all over the state and beyond. Finally, the project will serve to complete a significant

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segment of the California Coastal Trail, consistent with the Conservancy's mandate to coordinate development of the Coastal Trail under Section 31408.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective 1D** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will construct nearly 3 miles of Coastal Trail.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on June 4, 2009, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The Bayshore Bikeway has been approved by the 18 cities and the County of San Diego that comprise SANDAG. Development of the Bikeway has taken place under the guidance of SANDAG's Bayshore Bikeway Working Group, which consists of an elected official representing every jurisdiction around San Diego Bay and a member of the Board of Commissioners for the San Diego Unified Port District and is chaired by County Supervisor Greg Cox. This working group has served as a forum for insuring broad support for Bikeway improvements by engaging key stakeholders such as the Department of Defense and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as manager of the national wildlife refuge in San Diego Bay. (See Project Letters attached as Exhibit 4)
4. **Location:** The proposed project would be located within the coastal zone of San Diego County.
5. **Need:** The availability of Coastal Conservancy funding ensures that this project will receive the highest priority for receiving the regional transportation funds necessary to complete construction of the project as early as possible.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project to be funded under this grant will connect to the Sweetwater River Bikeway that reaches eastward into the County of San Diego's Sweetwater Regional Park. In Chula Vista, plans are underway to connect the Bikeway to the trails in the Otay Valley Regional park in Chula Vista. In addition, the City of Imperial Beach, through its plans for an eco-bikeway, will connect the Bayshore Bikeway to the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed improvements on segments 4 and 5 of the Bayshore Bikeway and Coastal Trail are not located in close proximity to shoreline tidal

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action. The average elevations of the proposed trail areas are at roughly 7 to 20 feet above sea level. Under the projected sea level rise of 16 inches by 2050 the trail constructed under this proposal will not be vulnerable to sea level rise over the course of the Conservancy's 20-year grant agreement. Should sea level rise reach 59 inches by 2100, the access improvements will be approximately two feet foot above sea level at its lowest points and may experience occasional localized flooding during high tide events or storm surges. It is anticipated that at those locations, adaptation measures will be closely tied to necessary plans for harbor facilities, local, regional roadways and infrastructure as a whole. Ultimately, trail alignments would be relocated inland if port and harbor sea level adaptive protections fail.

### **Additional Criteria**

14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.
17. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** The proposed bikeway is a transportation facility within the developed area of the city and therefore the vulnerability to drought, fire and other climate change impacts are minimal.
18. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** As a non-motorized facility, the use of the proposed Bikeway segments will not directly result in the emission of greenhouse gases. Indeed, it will support efforts to implement transit oriented high-density development that do not depend on vehicle use. The facility could also reduce vehicle miles travelled and greenhouse gas emissions from vehicular transportation. The San Diego Bikeway trail will be accessible to neighboring communities by local and regional connecting trails and bikeways by non-motorized means and public transportation.

During construction, emissions from construction equipment would be generated. The construction contractor will be required to use construction equipment and vehicles that are properly tuned and maintained to reduce exhaust emissions. Air emissions associated with construction of the project would only occur during the construction period and would be negligible and temporary.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM COASTAL ACT POLICIES:**

#### National City

The proposed project to be constructed in the City of National City, extends from West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Tidelands Avenue in National City to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Harbor Drive in the City of San Diego. The project is consistent with the policies of the National City Local Coastal Program and the California Coastal Act. In particular, construction of the proposed California Coastal Trail/Bayshore Bikeway Segments 4 and 5 is consistent with the Land Use Plan of the National City Local Coastal Program, certified on July 10, 1997, which calls for:

**Public Access, Policy 1:** new public shoreline accessways to and along Paradise March and Sweetwater River Channel.

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The bikeway is within the planned alignment of the California Coastal Trail, and is designated as the Bayshore Bikeway in the San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan. At the project's south end, it connects to an existing 1.1 mile section of bike path that includes the Gordy Shields Bridge over the Sweetwater River. The project will connect to the Sweetwater River Bikeway that reaches eastward into the County of San Diego's Sweetwater Regional Park.

**Public Access, Policy 3:** In the event that new development is not forthcoming, it is the City's policy to seek the assistance of the Coastal Conservancy, or other appropriate agency, to acquire, plan, and finance public shoreline access.

Design of Segments 4 and 5 of the bikeway are 90 percent complete, but at the present time, funding for construction is needed. SANDAG is in the process of developing a financing strategy for the regional bikeway corridor network. The availability of Coastal Conservancy funding ensure that this project will receive the highest priority for receiving the regional transportation funds necessary to complete construction of the project as early as possible.

**Public Access, Policy 4:** The precise location, design and identification of public accessways shall be consistent, to the maximum degree feasible, with the coastal access standards prepared jointly by the Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy.

The project is on the proposed alignment of the California Coastal Trail. It is a component of the regional bikeway corridor network established in SANDAG's Regional Bicycle Plan, and it is included as a proposed improvement in the bicycle master plans for the cities of National City and San Diego. The project is consistent with the coastal access standards of the Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy, as described in the "Consistency with the Conservancy's Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development" section, below.

### San Diego

The San Diego segment of the proposed bikeway is predominantly located on an easement within the Naval Station San Diego and, thus, no local coastal program is applicable. However, the proposed project is consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act which call for:

**Section 30252.** Maintenance and enhancement of public access.

The proposed Bikeway will provide enhanced non-vehicular coastal access around San Diego Bay for transportation and recreation purposes.

**Section 30210.** Maximum access and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

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The bikeway will provide safe and non-motorized coastal access around San Diego Bay for recreational, commuter and other uses. It has been designed to avoid impacts to natural resources.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY’S STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSWAY LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:**

The project is consistent with the Coastal Conservancy’s Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development. In particular:

**Standard No. 1, Protect the Public and Coastal Resources:** The project is designed and located to minimize alteration of the natural landforms, restore native vegetation and natural hydrologic connections and to protect environmentally sensitive habitats by constructing access improvements around habitat areas, by aligning the Bayshore Bikeway and Coastal Trail within existing public road right-of-ways, and away from sensitive tidal habitat areas along sections of the San Diego Bay. Segment 4 and Segment 5, if funded, will provide a trail along existing roadways, through the Naval Station San Diego and areas of industrial land uses, minimizing alteration of natural landforms, using existing infrastructure, and avoiding any impacts to sensitive habitat.

**Standard No. 3, Access Easements:** Trail alignments for segments 4 and 5, will be built within existing public rights-of ways and public streets. Part of the project will pass through areas owned by the Navy. The City of National City has obtained an easement for this segment for public access.

**Standard No. 5, Environmentally Sensitive Areas:** The project has been designed and routed to protect environmentally sensitive habitats as described above.

**Standard No. 8, Trails:** The Bayshore Bikeway, as part of the Coastal Trail, will serve as a key coastal access for five jurisdictions that surround the San Diego Bay. Under this grant, the project will connect with the Sweetwater River Bikeway that reaches eastward to San Diego County’s Sweetwater Regional Park. Accessways from Chula Vista, City of Imperial Beach and the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, when completed, will also connect with the Bayshore Bikeway.

**Standard No. 10, Coastal Bikeways:** Segments 4 and 5 will consist of an extension of a 12 foot wide paved Class I Bikeway and pedestrian path with separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians, two way travel, on one side of the street. Other improvements not funded under this grant will construct a Class II and Class III Bikeway, with signs and striping, where site conditions do not permit Class I Bikeway improvements.

**Standard No. 12, Support Facilities:** Support facilities along Segments 4 and 5 will consist of directional signing, Coastal Trail signing, interpretive signing where appropriate, and safety signing. Additionally, way-finding signage will direct trail users to local and regional park facilities, for resting and comfort facilities, such as benches and restrooms.



**Standard No. 13, Barrier-Free Access:** The access improvements will be wheelchair-accessible due to the relatively flat and developed topography. Bike access does not preclude wheelchair-accessibility. Access curb ramps and signs must all meet California State Accessibility standards.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

On May 1, 2010, SANDAG approved implementation of certain segments of the Bayshore Bikeway project and adopted the *Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A) Final Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (May 2009)* (the “Negative Declaration”, attached as Exhibit 5) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), having determined that the project, with mitigation measures incorporated, would not have a significant effect on the environment, and approved the project. The Negative Declaration identified mitigation measures associated with potentially significant biological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and utilities and service systems impacts, all of which were incorporated into the project as a condition of approval. In addition, SANDAG adopted the *San Diego Association of Governments Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program, Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A) (MMRP)* with respect to these mitigation measures (Exhibit 6).

The project proposed for funding by the Conservancy involves final design and construction of two of the four segments (Segments 4 and 5) of the Bayshore Bikeway considered under the Negative Declaration. None of the potentially significant impacts identified in the Negative Declaration are related to this portion of the larger Bayshore Project, except for those associated with Hazards and Hazardous Materials and several impacts associated with Biological Resources. The impacts to Biological Resources, however, have been avoided by the selection of an alternative alignment (see discussion of the addendum, below). The reason for the limited range of potentially significant effects of the project is explained by the fact that the bikeway trail alignment was designed to avoid impacts where feasible. The alignment of Segments 4 and 5 is within existing roadway and transportation rights-of-way corridors and located inland in industrialized and developed areas, away from sensitive coastal habitats.

Construction of Segments 4 and 5 of the trail does require mitigation measures where the trail will pass sites known to have subsurface soil contamination. Mitigation will consist of Mitigation Measures Haz-1 and Haz-2, which involve subsurface investigation and, if necessary, remediation prior to ground disturbing activities associated with the project.

In April 2010, SANDAG prepared and approved an addendum to the Negative Declaration entitled *Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A) Addendum to the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (April 2010)*, attached as part of Exhibit 5. In addition to other project changes not relevant here, that addendum described a change to the project affecting Segment 4: the alignment for segment 4 was selected from the various alternatives described in the Negative Declaration and minor changes to the alignment of the selected alternative were made. As detailed in the addendum, the alternative alignment selected for Segment 4 will result in avoiding environmental effects to biological resources, since the chosen alignment does not require a bridge widening or culvert crossing. No other new or increased impacts were identified due to this change in the project and, thus, an addendum, rather than

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additional environmental documentation was appropriate under CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. §§15000 et seq.) Section 15164.

In October 2010, SANDAG prepared and approved a second addendum: *Bayshore Bikeway Project (Segments 4, 5, 7, and 8A) Second Addendum to the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (April 2010)*, attached as part of Exhibit 5. The second addendum did not deal with any changes affecting segments 4 and 5 and, thus, has no bearing on the project proposed for funding by the Conservancy.

After SANDAG adopted the Negative Declaration in 2009, the Natural Resources Agency issued new CEQA Guidelines to guide the assessment of the environmental impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15064.4 instructs agencies about their options for determining the significance of greenhouse gas emissions. In accordance with this guidance, Conservancy staff have qualitatively analyzed the project to assess the significance of its greenhouse gas emissions, and conclude that this impact is less-than-significant. This new analysis does not require the preparation of additional CEQA documentation because it does not reveal the presence of new significant effects, nor does this new analysis trigger any of the other standards established in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15162.

The Conservancy staff's assessment of this project's greenhouse gas emissions impact is based on facts described in the 'Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines' section, above, under the heading "18. Minimization of Greenhouse Gas Emissions". In summary, the operation of the project, which will encourage alternative, non-vehicular transportation, likely will reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions and construction emissions will be minimal. Thus, the project does not have the potential to contribute to a significant project-specific or cumulative impact related to greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff has reviewed the Negative Declaration and the addenda, the MMRP and the additional information concerning potential effects of greenhouse gas emissions and concurs that the portion of the construction project to be funded by the Conservancy will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Thus, staff recommends that the Conservancy find that there is no evidence that the project has the potential for a significant effect on the environment as defined in 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15382. Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon the Conservancy's approval of the project.